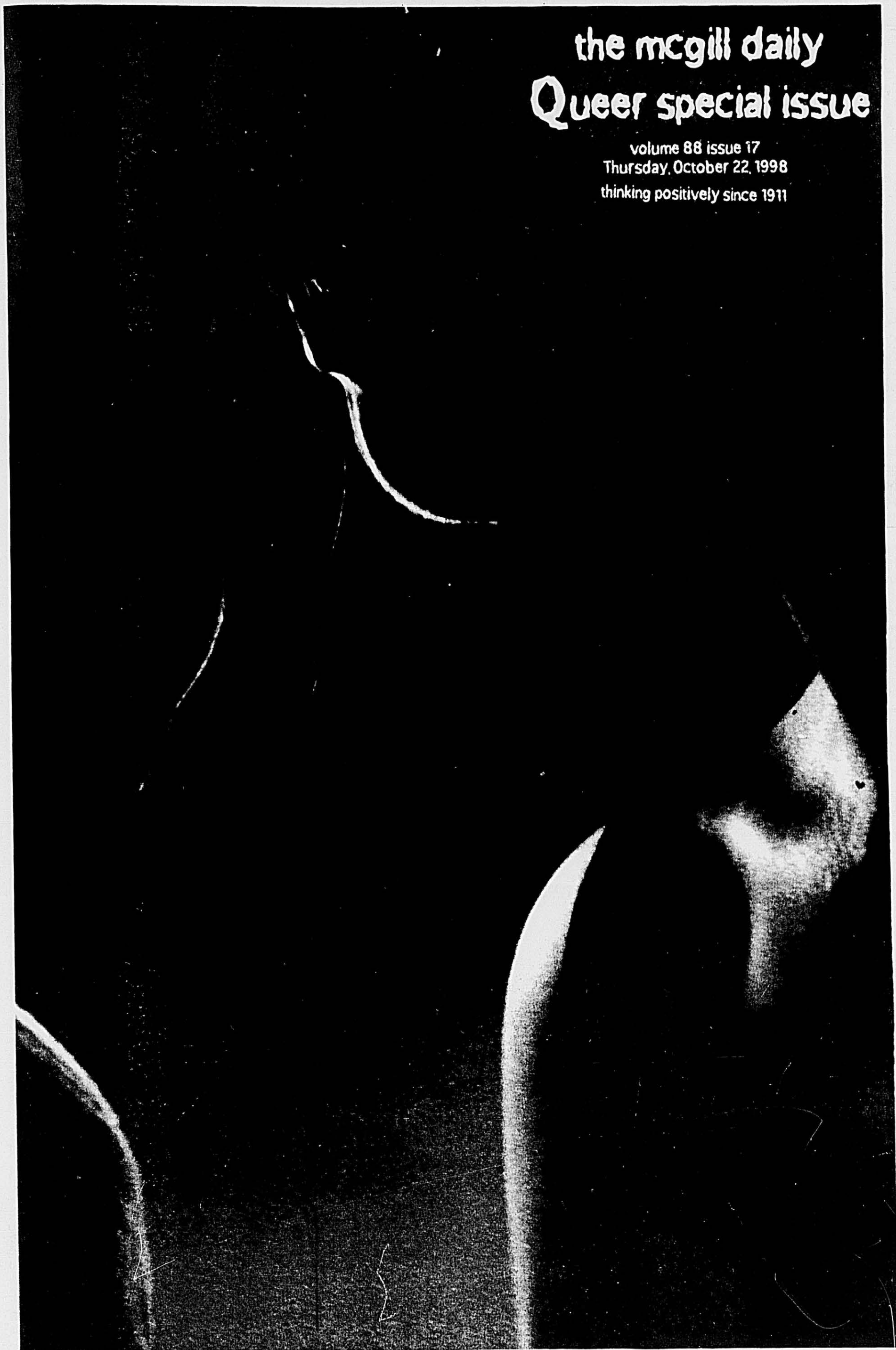


the mcgill daily
Queer special issue

volume 88 issue 17
Thursday, October 22, 1998
thinking positively since 1911



EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION

COMMENT

by James Yap

On October 9, Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming, was found pistol-whipped and chained to a fence. He died three days later, and it has been confirmed that Mr. Shepard was singled out for the savage attack because of his sexual orientation. Two 21-year-old men have been arrested and charged with his murder. Mr. Shepard's brutal murder sent a ripple of shockwaves through the United States and Canada.

Such a murder requires a good deal of planning and physical exertion that reflect the hatred these two young men must have had for gays. For example, you do not beat someone to death because you dislike him or her slightly. Nor do you tie a resisting man to a fence if you are not sure of what you are doing. Whoever did this must have had an intense hatred of gays because all they knew about him was that he was a homosexual. The nature of the crime was not the only shocking part; many people were alarmed that such vicious animosity towards gays could be fostered in our supposedly open-minded society.

In response to Shepard's murder, the proposed Hate Crimes Prevention Act received a lot of exposure in the United States. What the HCPA does is allow the federal investigation of any crime involving death or bodily harm where "the actual or perceived race, colour, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or disability" of the victim is a motive. Before, only hate crimes based on race, religion, national origin or colour could be federally investigated, and only if the victim was trying to exercise a "federally protected right." Essentially, the federal government is taking it upon itself to punish hate crimes in cases where the states themselves are unwilling to do so. This action is long overdue as anti-gay crimes are the third most common type of

reported hate crimes (and those are just the reported incidents).



AP PHOTO

However, this step is not enough to ensure that hate crimes, including hate crimes against gays, are significantly reduced.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act, however, is a misnomer. It is not a prevention act; it is more of a punishment act. To effectively prevent hate crimes, more effort must be made to attack the root of the problem — namely, the attitude many young people have towards gays. This does not apply solely to the United States either; keep in mind that, although a 6% increase in anti-gay hate crimes has been reported in the US for 1996, the Globe And Mail reported this figure at 20% for the Toronto area this year. Of course, whether this reflects an actual increase in hate crimes or an increase in victims willing to report them is unknown. Therefore, these statistics are not so reliable.

Where prevention does lie is in education. There is a tendency among many young people (say elementary school to early high school age) to casually treat the word "gay" as an insult. For example, they may dismiss someone they dislike as "gay" or describe something that annoys them by say-

ing "that's so gay." However, many of them will insist that they have no real prejudice against gays; that is, although they use the word "gay" as an insult, they declare that they would have no problems getting along with someone who actually is gay. Perhaps they feel it is okay to casually make fun of gays because they don't think there are any queers around. But these people never put themselves in the situation of a gay individual who has not yet come out. This constant derision of gays, although casual, creates an environment in which it would be extremely difficult for a gay person to openly acknowledge their sexual orientation.

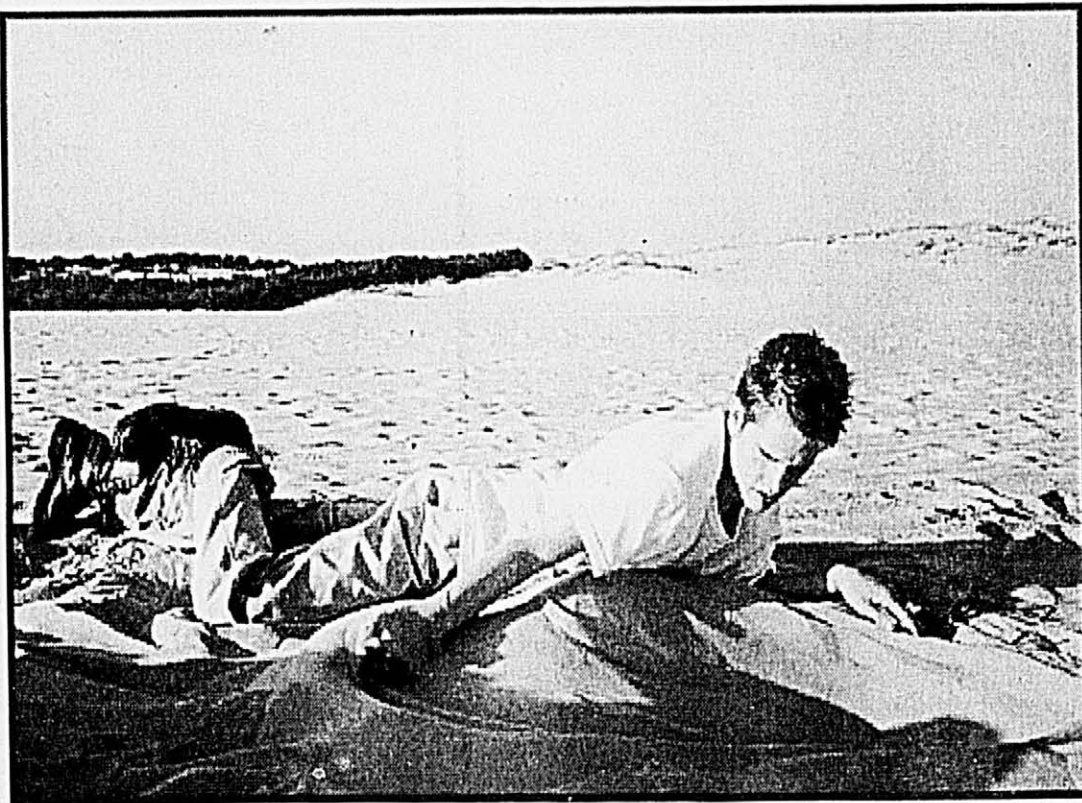
Therefore, in such an environment, little or no individuals would be openly gay.

Now imagine this situation from the perspective of a straight individual in such an environment. For most, or at least many,

natural from a biological point of view that this would be so. I believe it is perfectly alright for someone to be uncomfortable seeing public displays of affection between gay people, so long as he or she acknowledges and defends the right of those people to do so. However, considering the natural aversion straight people have towards same-sex relations, it is not hard to imagine some straight people forming misinformed stereotypes or unfair prejudices towards gays if they don't know any openly gay people personally. Yes, these people would have to be not very clever, but it is still not a situation that is difficult to imagine. This concept can be stretched slightly further to imagine that the seeds of prejudice, once planted, can in rare and insular cases develop into hatred.

Before I finish, I would like to mention that my high school was an environment like the one I described above. Almost no people who went to that school were openly gay. I can remember the first time I learned that a good friend of mine was gay; I was 14. He was about to move to England and so he didn't care what people would think of him if he

AP PHOTO



straight people, the idea or imagery of sexual activity between members of the same sex is a less than savoury notion. This is a fact that cannot and, I would say, even should not be avoided; it is

came out. I'll readily admit that I was upset. I wasn't upset because he was gay, I was upset because of the way I learned: I came back from a long vacation and everybody was talking about it. I was

give them a chance to think about it in a constructive classroom setting to avoid the issue being suddenly thrust upon them for the first time at any point in the future.

upset because even though we were close friends, he never told me directly (because I was out of the country when he decided to come out) and I only found out through other people. However, the fact still remains that I was upset, along with many of our other friends, and openly so, when we probably should not have been. Perhaps he hadn't been hiding it from us, perhaps he himself did not know he was gay until slightly earlier. Perhaps he would have been justified in hiding it from us, seeing as there were no other openly gay people in our grade at the time. But any gay person who saw us getting upset probably became less inclined to openly acknowledge his or her sexual orientation. Unfortunately, such a situation is all too common. Generally, if the first time a straight person is directly exposed to gay issues is when he or she learns that his or her close friend is gay, that straight person can't really be expected to react perfectly. However, perhaps we would have reacted better if our first exposure to gay issues had come in the classroom with a guidance counsellor, and that is the point behind everything I've been saying.

More effort should be made to expose young children to the issues of homosexuality, to teach them that gay people are normal people, that it is alright if they or any of their friends are gay, and generally to



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EDITORIAL

While queer issues have made progress in politics and mainstream media in recent years, members of diverse groups in society persist in verbally and physically attacking the global queer community. The recent brutal slaying of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming rudely awakens us to the distance society has yet to cover to ensure that members of the queer community can live openly, freely and safely.

The Daily's Statement of Principles recognises that "to help correct inequities, to the best of its staff's abilities, the Daily should depict and analyse power relations accurately in its coverage." Every issue of the Daily, therefore, strives to give a voice to the marginalized and under-represented communities of McGill and society at large. By devoting a special issue to queer concerns, we hope to assist the various support and activist groups on campus and in the Montréal area in highlighting their successes and goals.

In response to the overwhelming number of creative pieces submitted for the issue, we have included several drawings, poems and short stories. Queer issues are too often confined to the realm of politics. Art is more personal and allows the reader to engage in the conscience of the creator more effectively perhaps than can news or feature

articles.

Finally, we would like to thank all our contributors. We regret that many submissions were not published due to lack of space but

encourage those who volunteered their work to continue to do so. We hope you enjoy the read and we look forward to your feedback.

James Chow and Celine Heinbecker
Queer Issue Coordinators

the daily welcomes comments and criticism. letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and are printed in the following Daily issue.

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BODIES, RESTLESS AND IN MOTION

Image et Nation and its tenacious explorations...

by Salman M. Husain and Julien Lapointe

"The archetypal man-boy rapport is given a sexual dynamic; one, it is arguable, that was always there, though carefully suppressed."

Culture-swamped in the West, we tend to hold a check-in-balance rapport with our bodies. A whole philosophic and religious tradition has been constructed on a mind/body split that's pretext to the maintenance of hierarchies. "Mind over matter" isn't just a figure of speech; not incidentally, there's a course here at McGill devoted to exploring the inherent contradictions and questions of the so-called philosophy of the mind. If the mind is a part of our biological make-up, why is it construed as being so distinct from the rest of the body? Or, inversely, are our minds part of a spiritual whole altogether superior to our bodies?

One principle tenet of Queer culture can be the insurrection of bodily force in opposition of this supposed mind-culture tradition. The body is no longer to be controlled, subdued. Nor is it a separate entity divorced from our selves. We experience, through the body, sexuality, pleasure, pain, etc... It's part of who we are, and with difficulty is it watched over. The downside of course is the inevitable truth, which has always existed, that we can't fend off what afflicts our bodies. Disease, illness, just like desire and pleasure, remind of the vulnerability of the body. AIDS, cancer, death; it's all part of the physicality of experience that is unpredictable. If we don't suffer through existence, we at least have to endure it.

This year's *Image et Nation* offered plenty of films to explore the topic of the body, and its desires. Few films are similar, and in not all of them is the body a central theme. Still, in such very different films, like Mike Hoolboom's body of

work and Antonio Capuno's *Pianese Nunzio, Fourteen in May*, the question of body, desire and sometimes soul is addressed.

Body of Angst

Among the most remarkable avant-garde achievements at the festival, Mike Hoolboom's experimental non-narratives capture the body in all its polymorphous angst. This seemingly private discourse stretches out into the public sphere through means of various social commentary. There are two witty open letters to Madonna, with written text running along the bottom of the screen, superimposed over the diva's videos. In one, "James" reminisces over having worked on a Madonna video. It starts out as an appreciative fan letter: James enjoyed working on the set, cleaning the floors. Then: "you taught me to love the tiles [...], [to love] the discipline." In the end, Madonna takes him up to her bedroom where she whacks his ass, then lets him play with the broom till he gets splinters. In short, he knows why "they call [her] the 'boss.'"

An indulgence in gay male S/M pornography? An exposition of the erotic content that doesn't make it by the American censor boards (directed at *la provocante* Madonna)? A snickering attack on the mass culture industry, on the sexual politics hidden behind any kind of fan-based, celebrity hero-worship (that keeps mass culture running)? Sex is both a release and the ultimate entrapment. Its extreme forms are repressed, but once revealed, come to resemble the trappings of American culture at large. Hoolboom keeps his address within the enclosures of male orientation. The worship of the stereotypical bitch-queen is very much a male fantasy: it's clear-cut sexism. So is Hoolboom saying that our culture industry is also, resolutely a patriarchal and demeaning one? It's never clear; for the sake of ambiguity and

complexity, Hoolboom keeps one eye on his satire, the other on his hard-on...

House of Pain is a one hour, elegiac surrealist piece, comparable in style to Lautréamont and Rimbaud. Much like in *Une saison en enfer*, a personal confession resonates with larger issues of bodily-spiritual tension. The confessional form is less overt than in *Une saison...*; one assumes the images being projected hold some personal relevance to Hoolboom since they're so expressive of the gay *mal de vivre* vs. emancipatory ecstasy dynamic that runs throughout his work.

In form, *House of Pain* consists of four segments, shot in a yellow tainted black and white. Sound effects are amplified, with no dialogue, while melodious but at times piercing music accompanies the images. The segments are essays on the emancipation of the sexual self, under all extremes and forms, while at the same conveying a sense of trauma (directed at the spectator) over an experimentation having gone too far. At the end of the third segment, Hoolboom cuts the tone from one of morbid relentlessness and exploration, to a more joyful, pleasurable look at the sunnyside of life (two men playing at a children's park). The film goes from a deep focus on pushing sexual/bodily inquiry past conventional boundaries to all-out superficiality: a day at the park, childhood socialization out in the open, visible, veiling world.

The Captivating Eye

Among the most remarkable feature narrative achievements at the festival, Antonio Capuno captures mind/soul/body in all its courageous tenacity and power in *Pianese Nunzio, Fourteen in May*. In this movie, characterizations tell the storyline. It is the characters' point of views that are elevated. Their comprehension of the setting, a dilapidated neighbourhood in Naples, and its mood is translated through Capuno's camera technique. In certain scenes, he positions the camera through a given character's eyes. In other scenes, the characters, each at least one time during the course of the film,



make confessional lingo-style addresses to the camera (and us). Hence he makes the relationship of characters' point of views, with camera position, an interactive and compelling one.

In spite of the fact the camera seems to take backseat to characterization, the visuals are strikingly bold. They span the scope of the town and its people in a majestic, generous succession of complete covering angles. The camera reveals the beauty of the neighbourhood, but also its crumbling traditions; visually evident from the non-maintenance of the glorious architecture.

Central to the drama is a man-boy relationship. The Good guys vs. Bad guys arguments surrounding this relationship unravel, leaving any possible resolution ambiguous. *Pianese Nunzio*, who will be fourteen in May, is a regular kid experimenting life with an ease characteristic of his age. Nunzio is a singer, with aspirations to priesthood, living in abject poverty, surrounded by the mean streets that the mob controls. Nunzio befriends Father

Luranzo Borrelli, who is not only his mentor, but may as well be the whole town's; Father Luranzo's courage, stemming out of his firm religious beliefs, to take on the mob, is well-appreciated. Though Father Luranzo, along with his crime-fighting, is having a sexual relationship with Nunzio... The archetypal man-boy rapport is given a sexual dynamic; one, it is arguable, that was always there, though carefully suppressed.

(continued on page 15)

"Disease, illness, just like desire and pleasure, remind of the vulnerability of the body. AIDS, cancer, death; it's all part of the physicality of experience that is unpredictable. If we don't suffer through existence, we at least have to endure it."

THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ANY NAME?

by Marlo Ritchie

QUEER MCGILL THROUGH THE AGES

So what is a day in the life of a queer activist? Or for that matter, a queer? Do words have anything to do with the choice of a toothbrush colour or an outfit? Good old Oscar Wilde would probably argue that words are at play. If k.d. lang hadn't call herself 'Miss Chatelaine,' for instance, could we even imagine her as such?

Before I embark on an exploration of an historical interaction between The World, The Thought and The Act, I will cut to the chase: there are queer students at McGill. Apparently, they existed even in 1973 which is when "Gay McGill" was first named. Incidentally, this group was the first Canadian university-based "gay group" of its kind.

The name, however, was short

lived. "Gay and Lesbians of McGill" (GALOM), replaced the original title as women undoubtedly caught on to the fact that the word "lesbian" actually validates their existence as separate from gay guys. After the lesbos staked their claim, the name game started again. The big old "B" was snuck in, as apparently the queers realized that bisexuals were also in their midst. "Lesbians, Bisexuals and Gays of McGill"

(LBGM) seemed perfectly stable for years and years, as a mostly-male executive resisted further change. Last year, the dykes started up again, arguing that the "T" needed to be present to account for any trans folk on campus. The name LBGM had a short shelf life. This year the executive has finally approved the title "Queer McGill." Has this made life any easier? Has day-to-day activity changed as a result?

The office is still located in room 429 of the Shatner Building (3480 McTavish St). It is open every day for drop-ins and has books and resources on hand. Discussion groups are bigger than ever this year: the boisterous Bisexual Group on Wednesdays at 5:30pm, the far-out Women's Group on Thursdays at 6pm at QPIRG (3647 University St.), the cool Coming Out Group on Fridays at 5:30pm, and the renowned Men's Group on Fridays at 7pm in the UTC Building (3521 University St.).

These discussion groups offer a safe and confidential environment to talk about issues pertaining to "being queer." They offer a space to meet like-minded people or to challenge the notion of homogeneity in the queer community. Activities and topics vary from week to week. Other groups on or near McGill campus include the Trans Group, the Queer Grad Caucus, OutLaw (in the Law Faculty) and the Queer-Straight Alliance.

Queer Line, a confidential and anonymous support, listening and referral service, is in its second

year and running strong. It is open Monday through Friday, from 8pm to 11pm (398-6822). A dedicated group of trained volunteers are ready to offer support.

Upcoming Events

A vigil is planned for Matthew Shephard, a 21 year-old Wyoming student who was recently beaten to death because he was gay. It will occur on Thursday, October 22 in room 302 of the Shatner Building. Feel free to come by between 10am and 9pm to light a candle and leave your thoughts in a book. At 6pm speakers will be present and everyone is welcome to offer their feelings, music or words. There is word of the formation of a group to deal with other tragic events in the future.

"A Taste of Avalon," a queer fashion show/fundraiser, is in the works for the spring. Auditions are on October 22. A preview will occur on Student Night at Club Unity (1400 Montcalm) on October 30. Rumour has it that lingerie will be modeled.

"The Erotic Imagination," a

workshop by Alison Carpenter, is taking place on October 23 from 7-10pm. Call 285-9155 to reserve space in this hot Friday night event.

The Halloween Dance is on October 29 at 9pm in...yes...the Alley! The first twenty people in the door get a free beer and a costume knocks a dollar off the \$6 admission. Door prizes, great tunes and queers abound!

Dyke Days, a celebration of queer women's pride, is slated for November 17-20. Events will include a women's art show/cabaret, workshops, a poster campaign and a stompin' dance.

If you have been lured by any of the above events, give Queer McGill a call at 398-6822. If you are interested in getting involved in any of the events, please contact us soon, or join the execs at their frenzied meeting on Fridays at 11:30am in the Queer McGill office.

Quiz: What could it mean if the 'spell check on this 'WordPerfect' program insisted that the words 'trans,' 'k.d.' and 'Wilde' were unrecognizable?

LBGM
QUEER LINE



398-6822
Mon to Fri 8pm to 11pm

THE CLASSY QUEER COMPENDIUM

INSIDE SCOOP ON THE HOTTEST QUEER WEB SITES

by Hilary Doda

Picture this: you're halfway through an essay on Stone wall, when you discover that your dog has chewed up all of your resource books. What do you do?

One obvious choice is pure unadulterated panic, but that has the downside of not being terribly helpful. What's the next best thing? Ah...glad that you asked. From a die-hard computer geek such as myself, there's really only one possible answer. You got it: surf the net.

The internet is a huge mish-mash of sites covering any and every topic imaginable. From computer games to sexual fetishes to translations of the Bible, you'll find it all here - if you know where to look. Unlike a library, the internet has no central catalogue and search engines are not always as up-to-date as they should be. That allows a huge

number of sites to slip through the cracks and forces the users (you 'n me) to spend hours sifting through the accumulated drack.

It would be impossible to list all of the queer resource sites out there, especially since there are sites dying out and popping up every day. The real trick is to find a group of sites that cover a wide range of topics, have a decent number of external links (connections to other pages on the net), and have proven to be relatively stable. I've compiled a list of some of my favourite, and am pleased to present you with (insert drum roll)...

The Classy Queer Compendium: News, Views, and Reviews

The Web's top queer news is found at the site of the world's best gay newspaper, D.C.'s Washing-

ton Blade (www.washblade.com). The full text of the paper appears online every Friday, with comprehensive coverage of both U.S. and international politics, and movement advances and setbacks.

If once a week isn't enough, you can get a daily dose of gay news Monday through Friday at PlanetOut's NewsPlanet (www.planetout.com/pno/newsplanet/). While it's not as polished as the Blade, freshness counts in the news biz.

For a daily news site with opinions and attitude, check out Badpuppy Gay Today (www.gaytoday.badpuppy.com), edited by veteran gay activist Jack Nichols. This site is a little more irreverent than the previous two, but tends to be less graphic-intensive (which is great for those

of us struggling with ancient computers).

The Queer Resources Directory (www.qrd.org/qrd/) is possibly the most comprehensive online resource for queer topics. The pages aren't as flashy (nor do they take as long to load) as some of the others, principally because the QRD is oriented towards information rather than show. Check out the page on family and coming out.

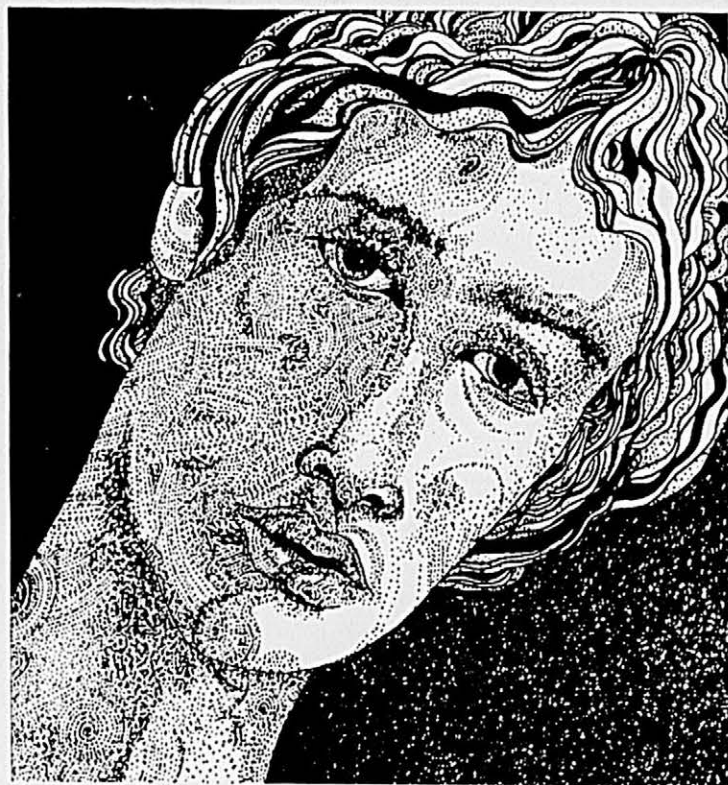
Bi The Way.... (members.aol.com/bibabygirl/bitheway.html) provides extensive resources for bisexuals, specifically bisexual women, as well as the general queer community. It includes a collection of queer pride graphics and symbols. Watch out for the funky rainbow effects on the

front page!

The Wockner List (sandiego.sidewalk.com/wockner/) is a weekly column by Rex Wockner covering a huge range of queer-related news items from around the world. His sublimely snarky sense of humour combined with a finely-honed journalistic talent make him a joy to read. And no, I didn't get paid for this review. Be warned/titillated - this site links to those with adult content, so if you're easily offended, beware what you click on.

*Thanks to Rex Wockner for pointing out these sites

CREATIVE SPACE



La Madonna Sans Merci
by Brian Dworkin-Robertson

Silent Skin

through silent curtains
light through lace
onto the covers of the bed
taken with your body,
your shape
I glide onto it
shining from the moon
and from the street

my skin fits yours
in waves of covers
crumpled on the bed
and I go in softly,
through silent lips.

- Marni Levitt

Making Love

you smooth me
out
tossing and turning
through turbulent sheets
you draw me
like a sword
or a long, thin line
running between
your eyes
and mine
you hold me
there
in an embrace
a twisting triangle
of arms and legs

- Marni Levitt

One Minute Erotica

tickle flick.
the swell of it.
"Eat me," I said, not meaning it nice
but then the wind blew and my skirt fluttered up
about my hips and white undies
flashed <Sunday> at the whole world.
"It's Friday," she said.
"Then we have all night," I replied.
and there on the street corner against the brick wall
she backed me up against -
turning me to face it with one swoop of her arm -
my lips brushed the brick wall, tasted the dirt of it,
the age.
And the wind blew again
and her nimble fingers slipped under the elastic of
my little girl days-of-the-week panties
and slipped them over my ass.
and there on the street corner, my ass turned to the
sky -
round and plump and smooth
and her hands feeling me like the globe -
she was very seriously searching for the right place
to vacation,
and then she pinpointed it. My ass.
The little dark mouth, puckered and eager
and she kneeled behind -
keeping one hand pressed into my back - so my
nipples scraped the brick wall
and she kneeled behind -
spreading my cheeks
like two continents
and placed her face right between them.

- Amelia

by Emily Harris McLeod



In Your Arms

"...And when You held me in Your arms,
precious one, i felt as if i were held safe
within the embrace of the world.

...And listening to Your lover's sighs,
priceless one,—ripples in a still pond,
echoes of affection, my soul was buoyant,
my mind, enlightened and free.

You made me feel as if the world
embraced and loved me—us.
Though we knew otherwise.

Even when You held me tightly,
your arms wrapped about me;
they never bound me.

In Your arms my sweet, the glacial world
became kind—but only in the presence of
Your loving, lover's sighs.

So now, i'm in the glacial age, again;
and tears, my tears, cannot flow;
and i can no longer feel Your arms

PRISTINE, PURE, and BITTER COLD

Without Your loving, lover's sighs,
and the strength i felt of when
You held me, in Your arms."

Brian Dworkin-Robertson

artwork by Brian Dworkin-Robertson



Queer Theory Presentation on Homosexuality from 1940-1980

by Tracy Sinkamba and many thanks to Charles
Brunelle.

The Bar Scene

The fifties:
Just a few of us
Just us, no fuss
Just having fun
Just beautiful...woman
Going straight from the car to
the bar
They can't understand us, they
call it improper behaviour
The policeMAN that is
The beast that is

Remembering World War II

The world in a rumble for a
sequel
Women are shown to be equal
For doing the job that Man did
That Men used to forbid
Now we got the gig
Working together
Whatever they used to do...
We can do better.

Pulp Novels

Paper,
The proper carrier
To break down barriers I heard
them say
The Pen is stronger than the
sword
We express our feelings without
using names codes
With no shame everybody is
entertained
Is it too much for you, too much
for your brain
Well, all you gotta do is close
the books
But I know you'll finish you
reading
When nobody looks

The Mattachine Society

You thought we were done that,
You could stop me,
You though it was that easy...
We want more power, must
keep up the fighting
So we unite protesting
With the Mattachine society

Stonewall

Stonewall, we are mad now
We riot and tear the place down
We need a voice, we need a
power, we need our rights
So we came together tonight
My pain is yours and you pain is
mine
The year, was 1969.

Forbidden Love

Is it love or is it safer to say
that it is lust

Is it safe to say that what is
different,
Seems dangerous and, scandal-
ous
But what you think doesn't
worry US?
—We will stop your machine
Follow OUR dream
Turn on the spotlight and put
on the silverscreen
To the love that is forbidden
But no longer...hidden

The Final Thought

So, I have condensed forty years
of oral history
But why does
His story and
Her story differ from,
My story

Because, they don't want future
generations
To feel sorry
What I believe is different from
what you believe
The same as what I experience
will be different
from yours indeed.

It's not what you
look like
When you're doing
what you're doing
It's what you're
doing when you do
it
What you look like
you're doing
EXPRESS YOURSELF!

CREATIVE SPACE

QUEER FILM COUNTDOWN

by Troy Seidman

// I tried and tried when I was younger to learn something about love, and since it wasn't taught in school I turned to the movies for some clues about what love is and what to do about it." - Andy Warhol

Chastity Bono, celebrity daughter/ubiquitous gay & lesbian spokesperson, has said several times that seeing *Personal Best* when she was in her early teens was pivotal in that its images of women in love enabled her to isolate and identify those feelings which had made her feel so "different."

Although I have never had a cinematic revelation per se, I am a huge fan of queer cinema. In the last few years, the selection has been blissfully overwhelming. An increasing number of mainstream films have been able to include gay and lesbian content or characters and avoid stereotypes. Cheers to indie filmmakers who continue to unabashedly produce queer and cutting edge stories for the screen.

Below is my top ten list of queer films. It reflects the tastes of one gay man and so does not represent the taste of the collective. It also is in no way intended to be a definitive list of the best queer films of all time. Enough apologies/disclaimers, here is the list in no order of preference:

1. *Heavenly Creatures* (1994)

Heavenly Creatures epitomizes the theme of oppressed couples retaliating and murdering their heterosexist straight enemies. Kate Winslet (years before that boat movie) shines as a beautiful Australian school girl assists her frumpy best friend/girlfriend, Melanie Lynskey in the murder of the latter's homophobic and meddlesome mother.

Although based on a true story, it is

not as "Sunday night network TV movie" as it sounds. *Heavenly Creatures* is more about a friendship and the agony/ecstasy of growing up gay than it is about murder. It is difficult not to empathize with the two young girls - this is an excellent film for anyone who needs queer sensitivity training. Besides, it warns breeders not to mess with us, or we'll bludgeon them to death with a boulder. (That was a joke, mom!)

2. *Cabaret* (1972)

I will not confirm the stereotype that all gay men love musicals. I, for one, know nothing about either Barbra Streisand or the Gershwins and would rather have forty alley cats living in my apartment than go see an Andrew Lloyd Webber production. However, I confess my love for *Cabaret*. The film is based on Christopher Isherwood's (he's a sister by the way) journeys through Berlin during the 1930s. Both the music and Liza Minelli are irresistible. Although the film glosses over the sexual climate of Berlin, it deserves the ten Oscars it won. Incidentally, the Broadway version was updated and revived about a year ago to outstanding reviews.

3. *Being at Home with Claude* (1992) and *Le Confessionnel* (1995)

This is a hardcore queer and Quebecois film not meant for the faint of heart. Shot on location around Montréal, the film is the confession of a hustler who murdered his lover. Adapted from a play by René-Daniel DuBois, the film works

especially well on the small screen. The flashback scenes of

Although the film is "so Hollywood" it is also "so funny"! The gay community finally got an out and proud movie star.



Rupert Everett is all we've dreamed a gay star to be: sexy, witty, well-dressed and masculine. I question whether the film could have achieved blockbuster status without him, as he steals every scene. The "I say a little prayer" musical number is hysterical! Definitely one to watch with your mother or grannie, it is truly a Rock

the protagonist frantically running through Montréal are extremely well executed. The film is intense and very sleek.

BAHWC makes an excellent double bill with *Le Confessionnel* another queer Quebec mystery. Directed by Robert Lepage, one

of Canada's most creative filmmakers, it is a psychological drama of the highest calibre.

I won't ruin the plot but it's involves Hitchcock, bathhouses, Quebec city and adoption. The film is visually breathtaking and has a great soundtrack featuring

Hudson/ Dorris Day extravaganza. Although he only had a supporting role, his popularity encouraged Hollywood to create more opportunities for gay actors: in addition to planning a sequel of sorts with Julia Roberts, Everett is writing a film about a gay James Bond character.

5. *Fellini's Satyricon* (1969)

Fellini was nominated for an Academy Award as best director in 1970, for this masterpiece. Although he didn't win, *Satyricon* should not be missed! The film is the director's vision of ancient Rome: part science fiction, part homoeroticism. The story follows a beautiful Adonis-like student through Nero's kingdom in search of his catamite (a young boy kept for homosexual practices, primarily as a passive partner in anal sex). The student encounters all sorts of sexual kink and decadence. The film is in Italian with English subtitles, and works well as foreplay. *This is not family viewing*. I do recommend visiting ganja county before viewing. It's a trip. If you don't enjoy this movie, I'll pay for the rental (repeat viewings are recommended for full comprehension!)

4. *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997)

and Depeche Mode. *Le Confessionnel* won a handful of Genies in 1995.

6. *Rope* (1948) & *Swoon* (1991)

I should send Professor Ponch (the MVP of the English Dept.) a thank you note for devoting so much time to discussing *Rope* during last year's Hitchcock course. The entire picture is shot in a mere 9 takes, the longest of which lasts about eleven minutes! Two wealthy young gay men kill a friend and then stuff his body in a chest. Moments later their guests arrive for a party in their apartment. The chest is used as a buffet table for the party! (Why don't I ever think of doing these things?)

Rope is Hitchcock's first colour film, in addition to being one of his least melodramatic and complicated. The movie is loosely based on the young and Jewish Leopold-Loeb couple notorious for murder.

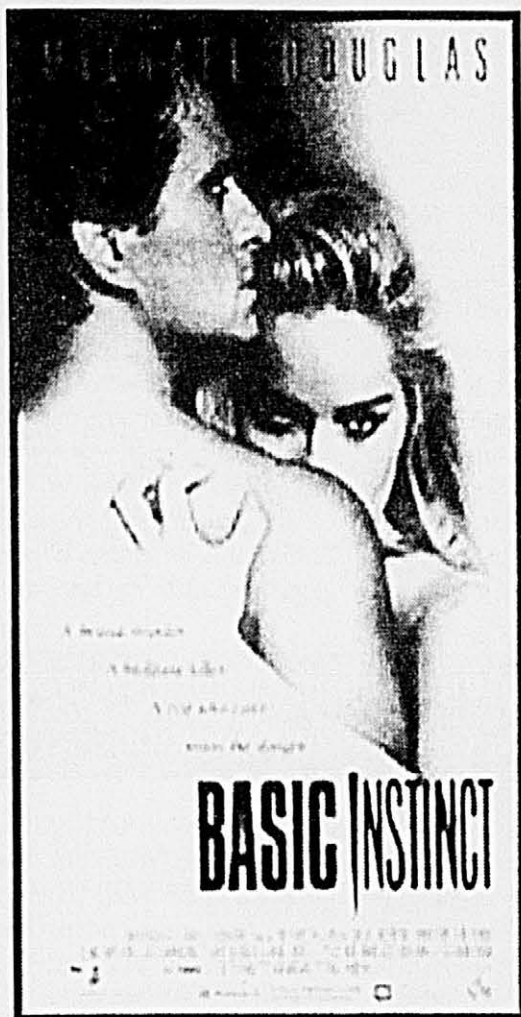
Swoon is a more accurate account of their crime as it emphasizes style rather than suspense. The story is told via an alternating first person narration and old news reel updates. First time director Tom Kalin bravely explores the couple's physical relationship. Another great double bill.

7. *Lucas' Story* (1996)

Political bullshit aside, being queer is about one thing: sex. Including a porno amongst my favourite films isn't inappropriate at all considering the context. Every fag has heard of *Lucas' Story*. I know too many guys who have borrowed a friend's VCR to pirate themselves a personal copy for those right hand/left hand nights. The plot is irrelevant. If you're looking for character development and cinematography, skip to number 8.

Bel/Ami Video went to some poor eastern European country, rounded up a horny gang of huge cocked hustlers and created the first gay XXX blockbuster since Jeff Stryker's demise. *Lucas' Story* was so successful that a sequel had to come! My only criticism of this cinematic achievement is that the "actors'" dialogue is dubbed. Personally I would to hear how "I want to come on your face" sounds in Polish.

A TOP 10 OF PERSONAL FAVOURITES



tivists boycotted this film as, in their view, it perpetuated a Hollywood stereotype of homosexuals as homicidal maniacs. Their concerns about representation may be justified. Their protests, however, simply generated a lot of free publicity for the film.

Basic Instinct made my list because it's a sexy movie! The film made hetero sex scenes look provocative: bondage with silk scarves, drugs and ripping undies off your partner, yum!

NOTE: Gay porn availability at McGill ghetto video stores is, well, limp. If you're a XXX aficionado, it is worth the trek to WEGA video, 930 St Catherine Est. It is the Mecca of boy-on-boy tapes. They stock over 3,000 titles and are open daily 10am until midnight. Membership is about six bucks for a year.

8. *Basic Instinct* (1992)

I know I'm going to get bitched at for including this. American gay and lesbian ac-

Sharon Stone launched her career by starring as a bisexual ice pick princess. She looks so good in this movie she gave me a hard on! The movie borrows heavily from Hitchcockian conventions, beautiful and dangerous blondes, amazing chase scenes, too many Red Herrings and a story line that doesn't make much sense. Although *Basic Instinct* is technically low on queer content, it is worth the price of a rental for the scene of Stone grinding with her foxy dyke girlfriend in a San Francisco nightclub. It's a sizzler.



Find the uncut director's version to see the beaver shots as they were meant to be seen!!

9. *Priest* (1994)

Unequivocally, my favourite film of all time. *Priest* is a must see for anyone who has struggled with their sexuality and their religion. The protagonist is a dedicated Catholic Priest who wrestles with his faith and his love for a man. The Catholic church condemned this film for its unflattering portrayal of the clergy. Although homosexuality is a predominant theme, the movie addresses the manner in which the church deals with other issues such as incest, alcoholism and celibacy.

Priest is a complex and emotionally heavy film, yet British director Antonia Bird prevents

it from becoming melodramatic or convoluted. I can't understand why American actors are so petrified of gay roles. Look for Robert Carlyle (who later went on to star in *Trainspotting* and *The Full Monty*) as the supportive boyfriend. Carlyle gets fucked from behind by his priest boyfriend, and it certainly didn't hurt his career. Crude humour aside, *Priest* is one of the only films that made me cry in the theatre.

10. *The Celluloid Closet* (1995)

So you've seen every film on my list and you're thinking you're a real connoisseur of queer cinema. Unless you've

seen *The Celluloid Closet*, you know nothing. This documentary is the source on homosexual representation in film over the past century. Informative and amusing, an entire course could be constructed on the merits of this film. Do I have to go to Concordia to study queer film? Karen Cope and Professor Ponech are you listening?

There are tons of cameos in this documentary of over 100 films and Lily Tomlin does a great job as a narrator. I loved it because it filled me with a sense of optimism and anticipation for the future of queer cinema.

If you can't find these movies at your local video store, bother the management and demand an explanation for their paucity of gay and lesbian titles! Let them know we're here, queer, and love to watch movies!

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WITHOUT HOME

by Jeff Webber

The mirror stared back like all evils coalesced refusing to show me anything. The mirror had been mounted on that wall eight years ago by a young university student who was working as a contractor's assistant on his summer vacation. After the job was done and the apartment had been furnished, he'd gone out for beers with the crew. They'd talked about football. They'd talked about tits and ass. Who he was shone clear like science. Being a beer-consuming university student presupposed a career in business. A career in business presupposed a fast red car. A fast red car presupposed a nice young girl, right out of high school. And a girl just out of high school would soon be the means for his very own nuclear family. He'd been embraced under the tyranny of his father; and his frail mother was all-order under the amphetamines he hadn't seen. He knew who he was. He'd seen himself in all the magazines.

This is a story I contrived about an imaginary man, who I envisioned building this apartment which is now mine, by way of occupation. I've got a lot of these stories that I tape recorded long ago in the engines of my mind. I play them back when I pass strangers talking, or I see two people embrace. Or a young family moves to suburbia and I cut their

lawn for food money. I play it back like a pseudo-sadomasochist. I don't have a story so it makes me sick, but I live off their stories like they're the essence of nourishment, like their linear programs will cock open my starving existence and fill me with a proper story.

I vaguely remember, at some time, having a story, about the same time I had a home. There was a plan fixed for my passage into post-pubescent normalcy, where I would love and be loved, where I

would work and have work, where there would be family. I didn't share this fixation with what had been my plan with those who had dictated what it would be. I was to be a product of their invention, like strangers I pass become my inventions. I told my body my real plan, but it only heard their sermons. It was like I was some crippled, elderly person commanding "move feet, up and over the step," but my body was silent, like the crippled, elderly person crashes into the pavement. I pleaded with my body to come back to me. I wasn't sure what I wanted with it, but I wanted it to be mine.

The story of me necessarily ends there. There's no language to depict my abandonment. My homelessness is holistic as my body departed me but holds me tight, and the physical shelter of my old house and home was

never real. It was another consequence of their invention. The safety of a story evades me like rain neglects deserts. Battles invade my landscape with the ease of heterosexual embrace. My body and I reek of the sweat and blood of war. It deprives me of a story. I deprive it of sleep. It deprives me of normalcy. I deprive it of food. It deprives me of love. I deprive it of touch.

My questions of authenticity met predictably fictional responses. Historical constructs were spread out before me like rotting tangerines. No one could see the decay that inundated their rehearsed explanations. I got sick inside myself as my body fed like a famished pig. I'm alive inside this house, but I'm homeless.

The paved streets of this rotund metropolis, the nights of intoxication and cold keep living. Inebriated and numb I pined for order, like my mother fell longingly into amphetamines to escape the pain that order served up raw. I wanted to embody any one of those millions of personas seething with ecstatic homogeneity, to become normal like the characters in Conrad Black's newspapers. I wanted my life to leap from the pages of Cosmopolitan in outrageous commonality. I wanted to recognize me when I examined my naked body.

I wander incessantly, as though the street might cough up some meaning that's been absent all this time. I might run into a catalyst incognito, exposing myself to a new dawn, a new era of comfortability. I often asked my-

self what it would be like if I were an intellectual. Intellectuals seem to embrace the pain of solitude, after renouncing the sickened tendencies of the populace. Then I laugh, and scream, "I am no intellectual. I am no urban bourgeois. I like comfort and belongingness. I like safety and stability. Routine is a friend like no other. Nine to five I wish I could choose the correct bathroom. Nine to five I wish my body felt like home. Nine to five I wish my sexuality wasn't a perversion. Nine to five I wish my physicality wasn't a burden."

The religious texts were always beyond me because they didn't include me. The churches: they were worse. They were infinitely cold, like the stone steps leading to their mouths, and so rigorously fastened to the perpetuity of denial that you forgot you existed

crushed identity like berries for a pure juice. An absolute identifier. Medals pinned to the chests of look-a-likes. You're a winner. You're a winner. Go home, but don't grow old.

It's time now. I'm bringing you to early this morning. I collected change outside a Metro station, and cursed within at the passing motorists. They've got to be somewhere on time, where I could never be, and they haven't got the time. I armed myself before noon. Turned a trick. The gun dealer was buying. Doesn't have to know what I am, just to be fulfilled. I then had a gun. Armed and dangerous. It was a preparatory strategy for my own little apocalypse. I'm at war with my body, if you remember.

The present is upon us. I've broken into an empty, off-white apartment, with no furniture or

I never saw emanating from a church a casual glow, or a warm invitation.

before you could turn your head away.

If I wear enough clothing I'm seemingly just another vagrant in want of money, and intrinsically damaged goods in the callosity that is the collective eye of the mainstream, the only stream.

Oh, the purity in the perception of community from the eyes of intact genitalia, anorexic female entities, and white, male, cyber clones. Purer than the piety of parsons, priests, and ministers, the surreal enormity of media's platonic painting has

furnishing, save a full-length mirror by the living room sink. There is a sink in the living room, because there are no private bathrooms in this particular apartment complex. They offer you a living room sink in exchange. Before the mirror, by the sink, I now stand completely naked and exposed. The mirror is staring back like all evils coalesced refusing to show me anything. My weaponry, also naked and wiped clean, is perched on the linenless mattress. I'm ready to get this war on. I'm ready to be proper.



PEOPLE POLL

Question: Do you think it's right for homosexuals to adopt children?



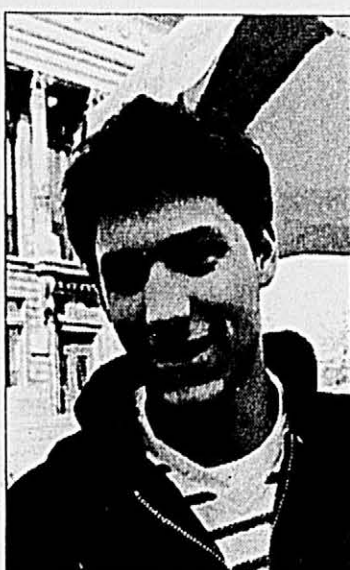
"That's a real fucking issue. I think there are a lot of gays and lesbians who can raise children as well as any heterosexual couples and even better."

- Nora Ciurysek
English Literature



"Yah, I think it's fine. Oh, I should have said something more profound."

- Evie Stagoll
Law (on exchange from Australia)



"I have no problem with it."

- Jason Anatomy



"Doesn't matter to me."

- Julius Ozemoya
Finance



"Yah. I guess so."

- Alex Wicht
History



"That's OK with me. I don't have any problem with it."

- Magali Monrocher
English



"Positive. Positive."

- Ernest Antokhine
Psychology



"Hmm. I never actually thought about it."

- Francois Vincent
Physics



DANCING OVER THE LINE:

STRAIGHT PRESENCE IN GAY CLUBS

by Micah Toub

Red, yellow, and blue lights strobing, spinning and flashing through a crowd of thrashing and dancing bodies. Lasers skim the smoke-filled air, piercing through raised hands. The DJ's music crashes against the walls and the pulsing bass enters the dancers' chests where it takes control of their heartbeat. Techno, house, drum and bass - whatever the music, they are all in a tribal dance. It is a grand aesthetic experience, an altered state. On stage, a nude woman gets painted from head to toe, while next to her a man wearing Christmas lights dances like an android. Drag queens stroll across the floor, mingling with topless men of perfect build, dripping sweat. Just a typical night at a gay dance club in Montréal.

Most people would agree that gay dance clubs in particular have the best music, the best light shows, and certainly the most interesting outfits. This is why theoretically gay dance clubs cannot always remain that way. Many "open-minded" or "hetero-flexible" people also like to go to gay clubs to dance and to see the awesome spectacle. While the gay community seems to be more accepting of straight presence than the straight community is of gay presence, tension in gay clubs definitely exists.

One night, a friend of mine was greeted at the door of KOX, a gay dance club in the village that has since shut down, by a bouncer who announced that only gay people were accepted. She replied sarcastically, "What? Do I have to have a gay club card or something?" The bouncer, with a straight face, declared, "There is no gay club card." She left and never returned.

In a similar experience, I was anxious to show a group of friends, including a straight couple who were visiting from the extremely undiverse and boring city of Denver, the amazingly hip and transcendental gay club scene in Montréal. I took them to Home, the club which re-

placed Kox. At one point during the night, the couple began making out on the dance floor. An employee of the club promptly came over and kicked them off.

Although these experiences were frustrating, I feel it is necessary to try and understand why such things happen. Gay nights at clubs are a chance for gay people to meet each other. In a world where gay people are constantly having to watch their backs and defend themselves from annoying hecklers, it is nice to have a place to go where everyone is on the same wavelength. For this reason, owners of gay clubs may worry that if too many straight people start thronging into their clubs, the gay club-goers may choose alternative venues.

It is possible that this solidarity in and isolation of the gay community began as a reaction to rejection from "mainstream" culture. This reaction translates into a physical separation of the two cultures and a reluctance on the part of gay people to be visibly so outside of the village. Many straight McGill students may not even be aware that the village exists. Although there have been gay clubs outside of it, the majority of them are located in a cluster out on east St. Catherine Street.

All told, despite having a frustrating experience every now and then, a straight person looking for a gay club to go to will not encounter many problems in Montréal. There are clubs that are strictly gay and have been for years, those which are relatively more accepting, and others which appear to be completely mixed. Everyone should be able to find what they want.

SUZIE TOMPKINS

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A STRAIGHT GIRL IN A QUEER WORLD

by Megan McGinty

I have been involved in the queer community since I was in high school. It was then that my best friend came out to me. He and I both began to make friends with a social group comprised mainly of 20- and 30-something gay men. As a sixteen year old straight girl, I was introduced to a world totally unlike the middle-class, heterosexual, and often homophobic one in which I had been raised. Queer culture became a major part of my life as I found out that the best clubs were gay clubs and that the best people to check out men on the street with were gay men. The latter were also the best people to give a not-very-outgoing teenager tips on how to approach boys, when to make the first move, and what to do about sex.

When I tell people this story, they often say, "Oh, you were a little fag hag!" This term popularly refers to a woman, assumed to be unable to attract straight men, who spends much of her time with gay men. As the "fag hag" is probably the most visible straight person in queer culture, it is unfortunate and detrimental to both straight and queer people that she is stigmatized as being involved in the queer community as a result of rejection by its straight counterpart. Fortunately there exists a movement to reclaim the phrase "fag hag," in order to make it reflect the reality of straight women (and men) who

are involved in the queer community by choice rather than necessity and who are genuinely concerned with queer issues and activism.

When I came to McGill, I had no intention of abandoning queer culture. Living in residence, the mainstay of heterosexism at McGill, I found few opportunities to make contact with the queer community. During my second year, I began to feel that I was not involved in enough

I believe that the only way to change this is for more straight people to learn about the queer community and become involved in working for queer rights.

activism. The Queer-Straight Alliance remedied the situation by teaching me about concepts like heterosexism, biphobia, and identity politics. I quickly learned that there is much more to queer culture than I had previously believed. As the co-facilitator of QSA, I love the opportunity I have to learn and teach others about queer issues.

Being straight and involved in the queer community puts a person in an interesting position. For instance, I think I now understand how it feels to taken for what I am not. I often "out" myself as a straight person which most straight people rarely to do as they assume to be recognized as straight. I am so irritated by this attitude that I no longer feel comfortable in situations where everyone is straight, or at least assumed so. In these situations, my involvement in the queer community either makes me an object of scorn or an eccentric - the circus freak, the straight girl who likes queer people (public viewing between 1:00 and 3:00).

In contrast, more often than not, I am welcomed by the queer community. Some people define 'queer' to include queer-positive heterosexuals. I see the logic of this definition - "queer" refers to a way of looking at the world, not what is done between the covers. In ordinary conversation, however, queer does refer to sexual orientation, and if I were to call myself queer I would feel that I was affecting a persona.

I see straight people in the queer community as analogous to men in feminism. There has been a lot of discussion within feminism as to what men's role is and whether there should be any role at all. The argument is that men, socialized to be the

oppressors, can never fully understand the female experience as the oppressed. Like men, straight people are members of the dominant culture. Straight people have defined the queer world as deviant for hundreds of years and forced them to stay underground.

I no longer want to be an anomaly in the straight world, I want to be the norm. I want it to become as great a social faux pas to tell a queer joke, as it has become in many groups to tell a racist one. I believe that the only way to change this is for more straight people to learn about the queer community and become involved in working for queer rights.

The Queer-Straight Alliance is a place for queer-positive straight people to work with queer people and learn about issues which concern them. At QSA, straight people can "belong" in a way that they wouldn't, and shouldn't, at Queer McGill. It is a way for straight people to find their place within the queer community.

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the queer issue

A QUEER PERSPECTIVE ON THE STORY OF SODOM

by Jawad Quershí

The morality of male-male sex has been debated over the ages. Much of the public perception has largely been formed by their religion. As such, misinterpretation of religious doctrine are particularly dangerous.

I will consider on particular religious text that "apparently" denounces queers: the verses that relate to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. My analysis of this story shall hopefully dispel the myths that surround it as it is preached in churches and synagogues around the world as a tool to oppress an already maltreated community.

Recent research has exposed longstanding mistranslation and faulty interpretation of biblical passages about homosexuality. Most simply, for example, Ezekiel 16:48-49

and Wisdom 9:13-14 define outright the sin of Sodom (Genesis 19): pride, hatred, abuse, hard-heartedness; they never mention sex. Or again, the "unnatural" in Romans 1:28-29 should be translated "atypical" or "unconventional."

Since the twelfth century, this story has been used repeatedly to condemn homosexuality. The word 'sodomite' was taken to refer to someone who engages in anal sex, and the 'apparent' sin of sodom was taken to be the male-male sex acts. Thus sodomites were condemned for homosexual activity.

There are sexual references to the story when he offers his daughters, who were virgins, to please the crowd. We know they were virgins because Lot says they "have no known a man." In

the Bible, "to know" sometimes means "to have sex with." The reference is used in the New Testament too, especially when Mary was told that she was going to

other religious interpretations of the verses argue that "to know" in this particular case refer to the fact that the men of Sodom just wanted to find out who these

strangers were and what they were doing in the town. Perhaps the people of the village weren't very welcoming to strangers.

Thus it is really vague whether this text refers to homogenital acts or not. What is evident is that this text is more concerned with abuse and hard-heartedness than sex. And if we allow the use of the word "to know" in terms of any sexual connotation, then what is clearer in the

besides raping women and slaughtering children, the armies would "sodomize" the defeated soldiers. This was done as it is humiliating the visitors. During war, for example, besides raping women and slaughtering children, the armies would "sodomize" the defeated soldiers. This was done as it humiliated the defeated soldiers by making them seem like women. Thus male-male anal sex was another star to the already patriarchal society by validating the notion that men are "macho" and women are inferior, pieces of property at the service of men.

Most of the opposition towards male-male sex in Western history was that it made a man act like a woman. Saint John Chrysostom in the 15th century and Peter Cantor in the 12th outspoken Christian opponents of homogenitality, both raised that argument. To be the active partner was generally more acceptable, but to be the receptive partner was "unmanly." Evidently, the objection was more to a man's being "effeminate" than to his having sex with another man.

So what was the sin of Sodom? Abuse, offense and mistreatment of travelers or something else? Both the story and its culture make it clear that it isn't a story revolving around sex. Lot offered his daughters for sex but the essence of the story is the maltreatment of strangers. It's a story of abuse and assault and not an epiphany from God to hunt down the queers.

For we have more verses from the Bible (counting in the Old Testament) that refer to the sin of Sodom.

The Prophet Ezekiel (16: 48-49) states: "This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy travelers."

Also according to Wisdom 19:13, the sin of Sodom was a "bitter hatred of strangers" and "making slaves of guests who were benefactors." And the sin increases as the strangers were angels sent by God who were demeaned and abused. There

are other references to Sodom: Isaiah 1:10-17 and 3:9, Jeremiah 23:14 and Zephaniah 2:8-11. And the sins listed in these verses are injustice, oppression, partiality, adultery, lies and encouraging evildoers.

Adultery is the only sexual sin that has been addressed even though there are no other references to sex. In the Hebrew Testament, adultery wasn't an offense against a woman, institution of marriage or against the inherent requirements of sex. It was a crime against justice and offended the man to whom the woman belonged. In short it was the misuse of another man's property.

Sodom is certainly a story where a lot of sins have been talked about but the least of them is homogenital acts.

The sad irony is that the story of Sodom isn't understood in its historical references and its used to abuse and alienate queers. Queer people are targeted by this story which makes them feel like outsiders and aliens to the society they are certainly a part of. For don't these preachers of faith understand that they are committing the same crime that the people of Sodom committed; inhospitality, insult, and alienation of others.

For who can sum up the argument better than Jesus himself when he talks about the sins of Sodom as being of wickedness that will not welcome God's heralds.

"Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave.... If any one will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town" (Matthew 10:5-15).

The Story of Sodom

THE TWO ANGELS CAME TO SODOM IN THE EVENING; AND LOT WAS SITTING IN THE GATEWAY OF SODOM. WHEN LOT SAW THEM, HE ROSE TO MEET THEM, AND BOWED DOWN WITH HIS FACE TO THE GROUND. HE SAID, "PLEASE, MY LORDS, TURN ASIDE TO YOUR SERVANT'S HOUSE AND SPEND THE NIGHT, AND WASH YOUR FEET; THEN YOU CAN RISE EARLY AND GO ON YOUR WAY." THEY SAID, "NO, WE WILL SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE SQUARE." BUT HE URGED THEM STRONGLY; SO THEY TURNED ASIDE TO HIM AND ENTERED HIS HOUSE; AND HE MADE THEM A FEAST, AND BAKED UNLEAVENED BREAD, AND THEY ATE. BUT BEFORE THEY LAY DOWN, THE MEN OF THE CITY, THE MEN OF SODOM, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD, ALL THE PEOPLE TO THE LAST MAN, SURROUNDED THE HOUSE; AND THEY CALLED TO LOT, "WHERE ARE THE MEN WHO CAME TO YOU TONIGHT? BRING THEM OUT TO US, SO THAT WE MAY KNOW THEM." LOT WENT OUT OF THE DOOR TO THE MEN, SHUT THE DOOR AFTER HIM, AND SAID, "I BEG YOU MY BROTHERS, DO NOT ACT SO WICKEDLY. LOOK, I HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS WHO HAVE NOT KNOWN A MAN; LET ME BRING THEM OUT TO YOU, AND DO TO THEM AS YOU PLEASE; ONLY DO NOTHING TO THESE MEN, FOR THEY HAVE COME UNDER THE SHELTER OF MY ROOF." BUT THEY REPLIED, "STAND BACK!" AND THEY SAID, "THIS FELLOW CAME HERE AS AN ALIEN (LOT WAS NOT ORIGINALLY FROM SODOM), AND HE WOULD PLAY THE JUDGE! NOW WE WILL DEAL WORSE WITH YOU THAN WITH THEM." THEN THEY PRESSED HARD AGAINST THE MAN LOT, AND CAME NEAR THE DOOR TO BREAK IT DOWN. BUT THE MEN INSIDE REACHED OUT THEIR HANDS AND BROUGHT LOT INTO THE HOUSE WITH THEM, AND SHUT THE DOOR. AND THEY STRUCK WITH BLINDNESS THE MEN WHO WERE AT THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT, SO THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND THE DOOR. (GENESIS 19:1-11)

THE VISITING ANGELS THEN WARNED LOT THAT GOD WAS GOING TO DESTROY SODOM IN A DOWN POUR OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE. SO LOT AND HIS FAMILY ESCAPED THE TOWN. HOWEVER, LOT'S WIFE DISOBEYED THE COMMAND NOT TO LOOK BACK, AND SHE WAS TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF SALT. SODOM AND NEIGHBORING GOMORRAH WERE DESTROYED, AND LO, THE SMOKE OF THE LAND WENT UP LIKE THE SMOKE OF A FURNACE. (GENESIS 19:28)

be a mother. Mary replied, "How can this happen, since I do not know man" (Luke 1:34). The verb "to know" occurs about 943 times in the Old Testament but in only ten references does it have any sexual connotations.

It would be scandalous to perceive that Lot would offer his daughters to the Sodomites. It shows that Lot's culture was very different from ours today because in Lot's time, the man of the household owned the women as property. It is bizarre to think that Lot would rather have his daughters abused than to have his guests disturbed.

What did the men of Sodom want with Lot's guests? They wanted "to know them." Some take this reference as sexual in nature; especially if Lot was offering his daughters for sex, but

passage is rape, not simply male-male sex.

Lot was a righteous man who was kind enough to invite travelers in for the night since Sodom was in a desert country where the nights were very cold. So, virtue in Lot's society impelled offering hospitality to travelers. And the same rule applies in most Arab and Semitic culture. One could even harm an enemy who might have asked for shelter in those days. Thus doing what was right Lot refused to expose the visitors to the abuse of the men of Sodom. Thus the law of sacred hospitality was violated.

If in addition the men of Sodom wanted to have sex with the male visitors then the offense would have been multiplied. Forcing sex would be humiliating the visitors. During war, for example,

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THE COLOUR OF RAIN

Bridget K. Wilson

October 1998, Seattle

There is a sound of screeching tires, the brakes of the bus squeak on the wet pavement, and a cold rush of air from the door sliding open brings the wetness of the autumn evening into the warmth and light of the bus interior. There is no one at the stop, and the weary driver sighs impatiently, slumps a little in her seat and pushes the door closed with one swipe of her hand across the lever. Moving like a cumbersome dancer tired of spinning through the sinking blue light, the passenger-laden bus continues with a low rumble downtown. The #7 rolls slowly through traffic down Capitol Hill, through the University District to The Ave where the woman sitting in the corner on the long row of seats in the very back of the bus spots the pale yellow numbers of the digital clock suspended off the Bartell Drugs building. She reads through the rainy window: 6:50pm, 42 F. She suddenly feels colder, leans back against the seat and closes her eyes. As the 7 exits the freeway and heads towards the water of Elliott Bay, she props her scuffed black boots on the edge of the seat across from her and crosses her arms over her knees, ignoring the middle-aged man's surprised expression as her left toe skims his book, and stretches the hood of her red sweatshirt just over the brim of her forehead, covering her partially-shaven head. She has not heard the bell ring for the next stop, and she thinks only of her destination. Nearing Fourth Avenue, she yanks the bell, slightly annoyed not to hear the reassuring ding, slings her overloaded backpack

over one shoulder, and tumbles down the back steps of the bus. She walks quickly towards the Pike Place Market, but waits for the "walk" sign at the corner, a west coast habit she can only break in other cities. Not here, not now. She feels as if she's being watched, an unnerving sen-

sation she hasn't experienced since the last time she was in this city. "The city has eyes," Mia had written to her in a letter sent to San Francisco, "and she sees everything through tears." Zoe feels the truth of this seeping into her brain as a few raindrops hit her face and trickle down to her chin where she wipes them with the back of her hand and pulls her small sweatshirt higher, exposing the skin of her back just above her army pants, and hurries across the street just as the light changes.

October 1984, Seattle
rockabye baby on the tree top, when the wind blows, the cradle will rock, when the bough breaks, the cradle will fall, and down will come baby cradle and all cradle and cradle all and cradle and all

Mia's mother sings and lets her deep voice resonate through the small apartment. As she sings she sifts through photographs of a small girl with a bright white smile contrasted with gleaming dark skin. elementary school pictures, middle school honor roll pictures, a high school picture of mother and daughter with Mia clutching her English award for play writing. She sighs slowly, holds

this picture against her chest and sings her daughter's name like a chant, "mia mia imissyou miiiiiaa miiiiiaa imissyou mia mia whereareyou miiiiia miiiiia." She picks up the phone and dials the number on the scrap of newspaper she has salvaged from Mia's empty

room. There is no answer and no request to leave a message. Sixteen-year old Mia, curled in a ball on Zoe's bed watches her move stealthily around the room, gathering larger pieces of a green wine bottle that leapt into Zoe's hand, hurled itself at Mia's temple, fell to the floor, and shattered. Zoe looks at Mia and glares, then tries to soften the impact. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that, it's just..." Then seeing Zoe turn away, she lets anger flood her voice, "Fuck! Why do you have to say that kind of stuff to me? Why do you do this to me?! You know I can't control myself! Damn it Zoe!"

November 1988, Seattle
Mia speaks:
She makes me so crazy sometimes. She sounds just like my mother, telling me not to drink, that it makes things worse. What, just cuz she's black she knows all about oppression and depression? She'll never understand how empty my family makes me feel. Sure, she doesn't have a father but at least her mother cares about her. My father is such a workaholic and my mother hardly notices me, except if I'm drunk and then she gets mad at me

for being a nineteen year old high school dropout, gets depressed and goes off and drinks herself. I fucking hate hypocrites! At least I'm not living with their rules anymore. I finally moved out last year, right after I met Zoe at school. What a joke that place is - I only went

it's been 10 years since we met, the relationship has never ended. I can't imagine it ever will. Yeah, I tried to leave after she got outta control all those times and hit me, but she'd call me at my mom's house, beg me to come back and forgive her. Then she'd kiss my hair, hold me all night and say that it'd never happen again. Once when I refused, she got the most cruel note in her voice and flat out threatened to tell my mom about me being a lesbian. She knows that will break my mother's heart. All my mom has is me, a black daughter in a sexist, racist society. Do we have to add the burden of homophobia to that list? Not to mention being poor. And Mia's always been really neurotic about money - refusing to give me cash for groceries unless she came with me and approved everything I bought. She sometimes seemed so irrational, completely untrusting.

June 1992, Seattle
Zoe speaks:
Mia's the first girl I had a crush on. I mean, she took me totally by surprise. One moment I was busy doing my homework and working at the cleaners so mom and me could afford to live in the city and I could go to a better public school, and the next I was cutting class to smoke on the fire escape just to be with someone who intrigued me so much I didn't know what to think 'cept I had to find out what she was about. What we were about. Sometimes I feel like my life is divided into two completely separate pieces - before Mia and after Mia. And I can't integrate the two. Even now that

Mia half-listens to a speaker in an Advocates For Abused and Battered Lesbians support meeting in downtown Seattle. Her head feels full of clouds but one sentence sifts through: "One characteristic response of an abused lesbian is to think that somehow she caused the abuse, or that it is her fault. What you must always remember is that you are not responsible for an abuser's actions against you. She is. She must take responsibility for her actions. Many of us try to change women we love, we try to find them help, but this is usually not effective considering the power and control they feel they must maintain."

Mia sits, knees to her chest on a plastic chair, her short dreaded hair still shining with rain from the walk to the meeting. When it is her turn to speak in the circle of fifteen women, she barely raises her voice and tells this story in a whisper like an echo of the wind outside....
(to be continued in next week's culture issue.)

Image et Nation and its tenacious explorations...

(continued from page 4)

Ambiguity of Exploitation...

The significant mechanism of the script is power, or rather the feeling of power. And yet what is minus is guilt, at least, between the Father and Nunzio. The Father is idealistic, believing in "la sainteté de l'érotisme." His belief that sanctity and eroticism go hand-in-hand is the proof of his guilt-free attitude. Nunzio is a kid chucalugging along life's many bends with a certain gracefulness and sense of exploration - his fucking an older woman is just one example.

On the surface there is no exploitation between Father and Nunzio. This is revealed in tender moments: whenever Nunzio is unsure about how to handle the investigation against the Father, with him being the crime-witness of the sexual relationship between them, the Father palms the curvature of Nunzio's cheek and says not to let the investigation bother him, and just be true to himself. One has to, nonetheless, wonder if this non-exploitation, on either side, is, in fact, real? It's hard to judge; the Father, for example, is older and a "mentor." He automatically has an upper-hand. But that can be mislead-

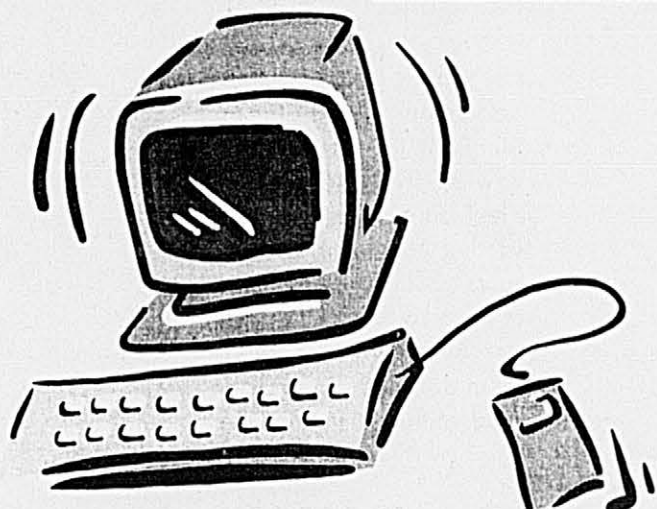
ing. There's no reason to assume that Nunzio is young and therefore naive. The film discourages any such claims, for either character.

Whereas Hoolboom presents desire in a framework of problematized excess, with, at times, undercurrents of misogyny, Capuno construes it as an occasion to freedom. The body/soul tension in Hoolboom is ultimately entrapping: the release of the soul, through bodily desire, nonetheless leads right back to the body (Hoolboom's seropositive status, only expressed in some of the films, is of relevance).

Capuno, on the other hand, while seeming to present a guilt-free relationship, is also aware of a reservoir of ambiguities. For him, all relationships imply a potential imbalance. The Father's ideal impulse to freedom, his sanctity of eroticism, is counter-balanced with a reality of sexual uncertainties: namely, who's fucking who, and who's being fucked over. The final question is well worth pondering: can we rise to an ideal, and hover beyond the power-shifts so integral to bodily interaction?

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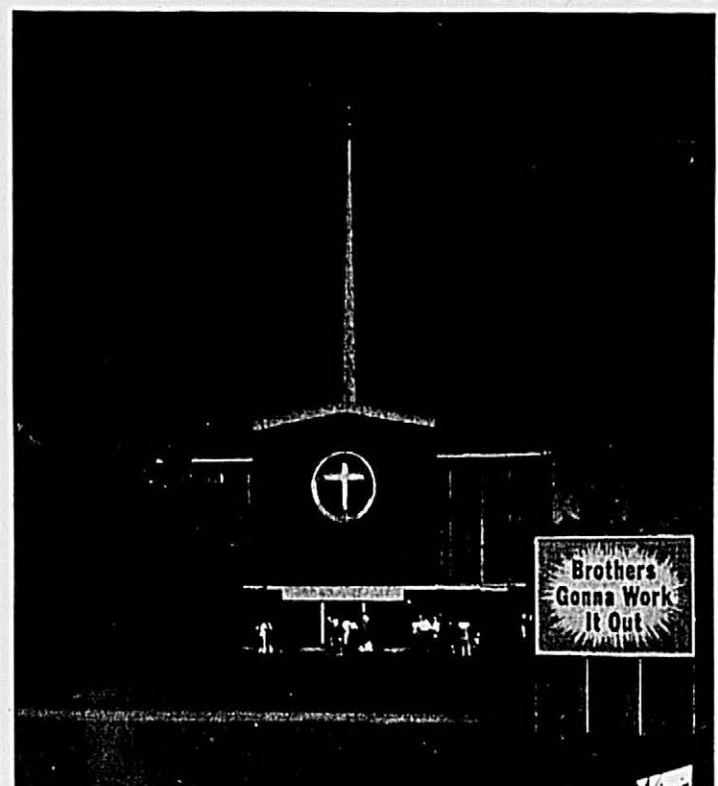
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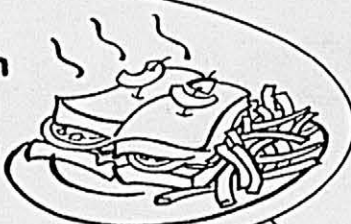
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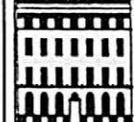
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